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ABSTRACT

Growing dissatisfaction makes major structural changes requiring legislative, popular initiatives, or the approval of governing authorities possible in U.S. schools. Schools raising academic achievement emphasize high student expectations, classroom management, positive feedback, tailored teaching strategies, professional work environments, and student responsibility. Sparked by the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, Chicago school reform efforts aimed to reverse poor performance, better serve disadvantaged and minority students, and lower drop out rates by employing site-based management (SBM), teacher empowerment, and community involvement. Research reveals decentralized decision making strategies characterized by primary community control, teacher control, or principal control. The Chicago Reform Act devised a set of 10 system-wide goals, required that resources be allocated to the most needy students, and established local school councils (LSCs) comprised of 6 parents, 2 teachers, 2 community residents, a building principal, and, in high schools, a student. LSCs were responsible for identifying improvement and spending plans and for selecting a leading principal. Chicago's school reform efforts involves a greater degree of decentralization of authority than reforms elsewhere. Poor accountability processes limited early program effectiveness, particularly in LSC member training. With a shift from cause to function described by Weber as the "routinization of charisma," the Chicago Reform Act is now producing real improvements, including: (1) implementation of structural elements and program revisions; (2) LSC competence; (3) parental and community ownership; (4) school discretion; (5) placement of new principals; (6) excellent in-service programs; (7) high-quality assistance for LSCs; (8) identifying and assisting poorly performing schools; (9) financial stability created by stronger central administration; (10) lessened violence; and (11) signs of educational innovation and learning. (Contains 119 references.) (TEJ)

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ROAD TO SCHOOL REFORM: THE CHICAGO MODEL

Debra Crump

Education reform and change is an ongoing mandated activity and the community and parents demand higher standards of public school performance. Forty five states were involved in a reform movement focusing on ambitious student standards, coordinated policies and support for school-level change known as "systemic reform" (Smith and O-Day 1991). There were many obstacles to systemic reform. Some promising efforts indicated how policy makers should enact ambitious goals and support them with coherent, coordinated policies.

In the past two decades, dissatisfaction with the performance of U.S. schools grew strong enough to permit serious consideration of major structural changes in American Education (Ravitich 1993). Past attempts at educational reform have been less than successful. According to Sizer (1984), public education historically has been one of our most revered and cherished social institutions. Public education has been a social institution that has actively resisted fundamental change.

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School Reform

The definition of school reform varies greatly among individuals, the media and even educational groups. However, school reform refers to more dramatic change in school systems than what can currently be achieved without legislation or structural policy changes. Fundamental school reform requires legislative, popular initiatives, or the approval of a governing authority, depending upon the degree of control granted the governing body for education in each state (Allen, 1997). Reform comes in a variety of shapes and sizes tailored to the individual needs of each community.

According to Andy Carvin (EdWEB) the first major milestone in the current generation of education reform appeared in 1983 with the publication of the report, A Nation at Risk: ''The Imperative of Educational Reform.'' This report outlined the poor state of affairs within the K-12 environment, from low basic comprehension rates to high dropout rates. Critics believed that schools were not helping all students achieve at the levels needed. A Nation at Risk became the call to arms for administrators and policy makers and ushered in what became known as the

first wave of educational reform.

Hess (1994) noted that the key word in early school reform efforts was "accountability." The legislation enacted in this "first wave of school reform" frequently did not include significant provisions to change the way schooling was conducted, although it sometimes included more funds to increase teacher salaries. Scholars and practitioners realized more fundamental changes were necessary if student achievement was to improve. The second wave of school reform focused on "restructuring" schools and school districts. Reform sought to move schools towards images of success by placing authority in the hands of school personnel.

Hess' article (1994), "Site Based Management as a Vehicle for School Reform," discussed three different strategies emerging as vehicles to accomplish this restructuring. The first strategy, enhancing teacher professionalism, encompasses a wide variety of approaches, such as, reshaping the preparation of teachers and retraining the entire teaching faculty, to giving teachers a share in decision making at the local school. The second strategy is, using market pressures to improve schools via enrollment choice. The third strategy, parent advisory councils, mandated for federal Chapter I programs prior to

1980 and decentralization and community control efforts in the late 1960's and 1970's.

Wang (1998) felt reform should focus on strength instead of solely on what is broken. He identified key ingredients to success in even the most challenged school districts: don't thrust a different curriculum upon a school or district; don't throw out everything old in favor of something novel, and don't require the hiring of hordes of new staff members. Wang points that leadership is indisputably essential for reform to succeed, but programs must be able to be replicated even without colossus at their helm. Teachers and key staff members need to receive on-going training and feedback to build their competence and make the institution more resilient.

Schools that do the best job of bolstering resilience and academic success share some critical features according to Wang. Those schools hold high expectations for student success, employ effective classroom management practices; offer frequent feed back to children with ample use of praise; hire teachers who use powerful strategies that tailor instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of each student; provide a professional climate and pleasant working conditions; and foster students' ability to take responsibility for their learning and behavior (Wang 1998).

The Need for Reform Implementation

The impetus for school reform in Chicago began with the fiscal crisis in 1979-1980, when the system failed to meet its payroll and required a financial bailout (Katz and Simon, 1990). In Chicago, October 1986, the Educational Summit was convened by then Mayor Harold Washington. Leaders from 35 businesses, educational and community organizations sought solutions to reverse school decline. The Summit worked on action-orientated agreements that linked education to employment (Mayor Sawyer summit report 1987).

In 1987 U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett, declared the Chicago Public School system " the worst in the nation" (Walberg and Niemiec 1994). In September 1987 anger and frustration erupted with the 19-day teacher strike. Chicagoans demanded reform of the public school system and an end to the crisis financing of education. In October the strike ended and an agreement to work on the basic reform and restructuring of the Chicago Public Schools through the Education Summit was reached.

There was no denying that Chicago's schools were performing poorly by almost any measure. Half of the high schools ranked in the bottom one percent in the country in

their students' American College Test scores (Mirel 1993). Only 3% of the high schools in Chicago scored above the national average in reading, and only 7% scored above the national average in mathematics. Almost one-half of the cities economically most disadvantaged high school students dropped out before graduating. Over half those who did manage to graduate from these high schools were reading below the ninth grade level.

According to the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, economically disadvantaged and minority students in Chicago were not being successfully educated (Hess 1986). The most disadvantaged students were shunted into one set of schools while the most successful were "drawn" into another set of schools in a system of "educational triage." The best schools were more than a third white in enrollment, while the worst enrolled only 6% white students. According to the 1993 Consortium Report, Chicago schools vary substantially from one another in terms of the percentage of low-income students, the racial composition of students, school size, and student mobility rates. The percentage of low-income pupils was twice as high in the worst schools as in the best. Sixty percent of the schools scoring below 235 on the Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) have over 90 percent low-income

students; only nine percent of the schools have fewer than one-half low-income student.

The survey conducted by Research, Evaluation and Planning 1991, reported the dropout rate hovered around 50%. The chronic truancy rate was double the state average. More than 125 were on an academic "watch list" because at least half their students failed to meet minimum standards on state tests for three years in a row. Many schools are dilapidated or cramped or both. Chicago reformers decided it was the system that had been neglected and stacked the odds against "at risk kids." The response of educational activities was an attempt to reform the entire Chicago Public School system. With this massive political pressure reform advocates were able to persuade Illinois legislators to enact reform bill (P.A 85-1218).

Site-Based Management

The legacy of the system of school management covers more than one hundred years. It was borne out of a mandate by legislatures to establish a system of common schools to educate children to meet the needs of society in a rapidly industrializing age. The centralized system of schools was

developed from a decentralized system of one-room schools that were unable to educate children to meet the needs of society (Prickett, Flanigan & Richardson, 1993).

Hansen (1990) cites the rhetoric of the reform movement changed in the late 1980s to embrace the term "restructuring," thereby reflecting once again the trend in the business and industrial sector of our economy and the rapid changes occurring in our society. This restructuring often took the form of eliminating non-essential or non-profitable products and services. It increased employee involvement in decision making, distributing power and authority to departments and functional units, focusing on increased customer satisfaction and paring top down heavy management structures. Education has now begun to emulate this approach through site-based management, teacher empowerment and increased community involvement.

Site-Based Management (SBM) carries many different connotations. It may be used to describe a radical devolution of authority under which local units set their own goals and objectives. These objectives may be at variance with the President, governor or other policymakers' ideas of what the one best educational system ought to look like (ef. Tyack, 1974). It may describe participatory management that includes teachers in school

decision making. It may mean greater flexibility for principals in organizing their still largely autocratically run school.

SBM is a democratic system in school management that allows greater school level flexibility and the increased involvement of those directly affected by decisions. SBM and shared decision making revealed a great variance in definition plan composition, institutional implementation and results (Clune & White, 1988: Malen et al., 1989). SBM transfers operational decision making from central district office to individual schools. It empowers people through shared decision making and requires collaborative involvement of the principal, teachers, support staff, parents, students and other community members (U.S. Department of Education report, 1989).

SBM is a way to structure school site/district relationships in a manner that places much more power, authority, and accountability in the school (Odden, 1995).

This has been a proposed way to help schools produce higher student achievement. Some theorists feel the closer the decision is made to those affected by the decision, the better it was likely to serve the students.

SBM plans ranged from the establishment of a pilot school in a district to trial districts. Many SBM plans

encouraged voluntary attempts at local site governance (Mauriel & Jenni, 1989). The great variance in voluntary plan composition is also seen in the amount of authority delegated, the nature and degree of participation of constituent groups, and the type and degree of support and training offered. In several plans the Local council had advisory power only (Clune & White, 1988).

Wohlstetter (1994) questioned whether under the banner of community participation, decentralization or teacher empowerment, school-based management has been on the educational reform agenda for decades. Although it has gaining support as a means to improve school performance, the specific process by which SBM is supposed to lead to performance improvement has received little attention and seems to be a hit or miss situation.

Some theorist feel that school-based management is not an end in itself, although research indicates that it can help foster improved school culture and higher-quality decisions. Making a transition to SBM is neither simple nor quick. SBM cannot simply succeed by giving schools more power over such things as budgets, personnel and curriculum. According to their report, Albers Mohrman Center of Effective Organizations University of Southern California 1990, schools needed in addition to power, hefty

portions of three other commodities that private sector research had found to be essential for making productive decisions: knowledge, information and rewards. Advocates of education assert that the central purpose of school-based management should be to improve instructional program quality.

Berry, Buehler and Small (1991) cite four essential characteristics they felt had to be implemented and evaluated within a school system as "practical and necessary conditions" for people within the system to be more productive; 1) administrative vision and leadership, 2) leadership through empowerment and organizational teaming, 3) goal definition, and 4) management of incremental change. The central purpose of school-based management should be to improve instructional program.

Noble, Deemer, and Davis (1996) advocated explicit and implicit outcomes for school-based management. 1) Improve academic achievement, 2) increased accountability, 3) empowerment, and 4) political utility. SBM is proposed as a governance model to better effect this outcome. Nobel et. al (1991) found the assumption underlying this ideal is that changes in decision making structures will foster changes in teaching practices, leading to higher levels of student achievement. Next, shared accountability, which

makes local actors partners to decisions, and makes them responsible for the outcomes of their decisions is as central to improving schools. Hoping that those involved in decision making are held accountable for its outcomes; better decision making will result. Third, empowerment supports the conviction that all those responsible for schools should have a voice in determining the conditions and practices of schooling. The assumption underlining this idea is that shared governance creates a context that leads to a more coherent school culture. Finally, political utility refers to the way large political institutions manage conflict, scarce resources, and public image. It might seem counterintuitive for those having greater power to yield control to those lower in the hierarchy; school based management allows conflict to be diffused by creating buffer zones which function as a cushion for central management. Political utility of school-based management also fosters ownership of the schools on the part of those closest to the schools; that is, parents and teachers.

SBM research reveals three broad models; 1) Community control which involves shifting power from professional educators and boards of education to parent and community groups at the school site; 2) teacher control, which entails delegating decision making to the building level in

the form of professional site councils. Councils created in individual schools where staff makes the decisions formerly made by the central administration; and 3) principal control, where principals are responsible for making decisions in consultation with the staff, parents, and community. While individual descriptions indicated a specific focus, SBM is the most frequently used terminology to describe the phenomena surrounding the decentralizing of decisions, giving authority to the local site, which is reflective in the Chicago Reform model (Eric digest, Thompson 1994).

The Effect of Reform on the School System

Decentralized, high-involved management, means teams of individuals keep actually provide services or make products are given decision-making authority and are held accountable for the results. Decentralizing power only and placing that power solely in a school site council presents many challenges. Power, knowledge, information and rewards are all needed to be decentralized, also vertical and horizontal decision-making teams must be created in addition to a school site council (Brazelay, 1992; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

Decentralization from a central board to sub-district level occurred in Detroit and New York. However, the Detroit plan, which delegated some authority to relatively large sub-districts, failed to improve student achievement or to increase support for decentralization. The Detriot Public School was decentralized into eight semi-autonomous regions in 1971. The regions contained 24,000 to 26,000 students, and were given a five-member board with responsibility of the budget, curriculum and personnel areas. Guidelines for these districts were established by the Central Board. Educational services and student achievement improved significantly in several regions in the first few years of the plan (Smith, 1973). A detailed analysis of the Detroit decentralization reveals that the Central Board guidelines were "so restrictive that regions were unable to diversify their services to meet the unique needs of students in their region". Regions lacked the ability to be creative in organizing to deliver services to youngsters (Smith, 1973, p.128).

In 1970, the New York City Schools were partly decentralized. Thirty-two community school districts, each serving about 25,000 students, were given a measure of control over elementary and middle schools. The impact of decentralization in the New York Schools, as discussed by

Roger & Chung, (1983) found that improvement was highly variable and site specific, but that decentralized schools were better off overall. The Manhattan Borough President's Task Force on Education and Decentralization (1987) noted, " The best way to strengthen (New York) schools is through decentralization of decision making within a framework of accountability for educational results and financial responsibilities''(p6). The composition of the New York districts were such that it was difficult for board candidates to be elected without the support of the unions or the Democratic Party (Manhattan Borough President's Task Force, 1987).

The data from this study provided a rationale for making the individual school the unit of decision making and governance. Further more, it suggested that decentralization, to the sub-district level only, was not sufficient to alter student achievement or empower teachers and parents, except in superficial ways (Design for Change, 1988).

Chicago School Reform Initiative

The Chicago School reform effort has been hailed as the largest and most radical SBM experiment in granting authority to local parents, community representatives, and

school professionals as a strategy for improving student achievement, (Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, 1991). Site Based Management is in competition with other more centralized approaches that emphasized the importance of coherence in the whole national educational enterprise.

The principal, teachers and parents in an individual school are assumed to have a greater knowledge of the needs and resources in their school and, thus, should make the decisions which affect their specific site (Davies, 1981). Though the potential inputs are great in number, the most important domains affecting schools include the budget, curriculum, and personnel (Malen & Ogawa, 1988).

Chicago's public school system, a unit school district serving pre-school children through the 12th grade, is identified as School District #299 in the state of Illinois. Its 483 elementary, 74 high schools and 54 alternative programs services a total of 430,230 students. In October 1988, the Illinois General Assembly passed P.A.85-1418. This legislation mandated a reform of school governance in the Chicago Public School (CPS) system, incorporating the major tenets underlying SBM. During the 1989-90 school year CPS began to implement one of the most far-reaching decentralization reforms in the nation's

public schools (Hess, 1991).

The Chicago Reform Act had three major components. First, a set of ten system-wide goals, which has been summarized as required by the Chicago Public Schools, to lift student achievement levels to national norms. These goals (reform characteristics) were identified in early research on "effective schools" (Edmonds, 1979; Brookover & Lezotte; 1979, Purkey and Smith 1983).

The second component in the legislation requires that the school's resources be reallocated and focused on the students with the greatest needs. Limits were placed on the proportion of non-instructional expenses within the school system so that the proportion cannot exceed the average proportion of such expenses in all other school systems in the state. This provision forced a reallocation of about $40 million in the first year of reform; it resulted in the elimination of about 500 positions in bureaucracy's central and district administrative units, thus granting an average $90,000 in new discretionary funds at the elementary school levels. The second mechanism was the requirement that schools receive equitable base level funding, with categorical grants and state compensatory funding added on to the basis of the number of qualifying students. This prevision, which called for the

reallocation of the State Chapter I compensatory funds, amounted to about $250 million the first year of reform. These funds would be phased in over four years, resulting in funds that would become progressively discretionary at the decision of school leaders.

(P.A. 85-1418) The third component of the reform act is the best known establishment of school based management teams in the form of LSCs. The Reform Act created decision making bodies for all Chicago Public Schools called Local School Councils, or LSCs, dominated by nonprofessionals. These LSCs consisted of six parents, two teachers from the staff of the school, two community residents, building principal and, in high schools, a student (P.A 85-1418).

Councils were given three basic responsibilities: 1) to create a school improvement plan: 2) to adopt a school spending plan; and 3) to select the principal to lead the school on a four year performance contract. This school improvement plan was to be drafted by the principal with input from the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC), the council and the community. Through the school improvement plan, local schools were given the opportunity to shape their curriculum in diverse ways to meet the particular needs of their enrolled students. The school

budget was shaped to support the components of the improvement plan (P.A. 85-1418).

LSCs were charged with making recommendations on textbooks, advising the principal on attendance, disciplinary policies and evaluating the allocation of staff in the school. According to the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, the local school is "the essential unit for educational governance and improvement.'' This places the primary responsibility for school governance in the hands of parents, community residents, teachers, and the school principal at the school level (section 34-1.01).

The LSCs were given the opportunity to add or delete personnel positions, however the principals actually deal with personnel, and LSCs with positions only, not personnel. This is where roles get confused. The LSCs are allowed to shift the focus of program resources, or add programs as required by the school improvement plan, subject to existing laws and union contracts. P.A. 85-1418 gave Local School Councils the right to select a principal to provide educational leadership to their schools. Several other important provisions of the reform act were implemented according to Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance (1991) e.g., principals were given the

right to select educational staff for newly opened positions, and teachers would no longer be assigned to schools on the basis of seniority.

Unlike many other forms of school-based management, where little significance was devolved to the school level (Wohlsteer & Odden, 1992), the Chicago Reform Act decentralized authority to the councils. In addition the SIP is used to assess the needs and resources of the school and develops long range plans to remediate school deficiencies at the community level. Prior to this act the Chicago Board of Education central office staff had much of the authority (Hess 1991 and 1992; O'Connell, 1991; and Easton et. al., 1991).

The premise of this reform act assumed increased local authority, involving the most highly invested constituents, would improve the Chicago Public Schools. Specific goals for improved performance were included to increase school attendance, graduation rates, and improve performance for employment and further study. This strategic reform plan submitted by the Chicago Board of Education to the Chicago School Finance Authority for review and approval. The plan was identified what the Board of Education and the Central Service Center would do to accomplish the reform goal (Quinn, Steward, and Nowakowski 1992). However, in

September of 1990, when local school councils were to begin their first full year of operations, the System-Wide Educational Reform Goals and Objectives Plans were in dispute. This dispute between the CBOE and the S.F.A. delayed the approval of the plan until May 1991; the school year ended June 21, 1991 (Quinn et. al.1992).

Elmore (1991) described the Chicago experiment as standing apart from virtually all other such efforts in an unprecedented decade of educational reform in the United States. Elmore notes that, "While the Chicago Reform has elements of both regulatory and professional control, it is mainly based on a theory of democratic control" (p.7). Moore (1992) executive director of Designs for Change, pointed to the need to break open the system so that the concerns of students and of their parents can get a hearing within the operations of urban public schools. He emphasizes that Chicago's attempt at school reform has widely been hailed as one of the most radical attempts to change urban public education.

Although at least five states, Kentucky, Florida, North Carolina, Colorado, and Texas have already undertaken forms of participatory decision making reform efforts, Chicago's is the most pervasive. According to Hess (1994) Chicago school reform efforts stand out as the chief

example of one current reform strategy, the devolution of authority from a large, centralized school district and its bureaucracy to a local democratically elected governance unit at the school level as Site-Based Management.

Local School Training & Elections

Beginning with the 1989-1990 school year and in all odd years thereafter, the board shall set a date, not later than the 6th week of the school year for LSC elections Section 34-2-1-C. By legislative mandate, the Board of Education is charged with conducting the elections. The BOE through the Department of School and Community Relations shall facilitate the process where by LSCs are elected (North Central Regional Laboratory 1990).

The Region Education Officer and principal are charged with the performance of selected administrative duties and, responsibilities relative to activities before the election, on election day and after elections NCRL (1990).

Section 34-D of the reform law cites the date must be publicized by date and place of election by posting notices at the attendance center and in public places within the attendance boundaries of the attendance center.

The eligibility requirements for parents are: one must

live in the attendance area of the school, must be 18 years of age, and may not be an employee of the Board of Education. Parents must have a child who is enrolled at the school. The requirements for a person running for community resident are the same, except they may not be the parent of a student enrolled at the school during the time of the councilperson term. Teachers must be employed full-time at the school and assigned to the attendance center in a teaching position and are appointed to the LSC by the Chicago School Board of Trustees following a non-Binding Advisory poll. Student LSC participants were appointed to each high school LSC by the Board of Trustees following a non-binding advisory poll. The person must be a full time student. Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors are encouraged to run for student representative on the LSC, (Guide to LSC Elections, 1996).

To maximize candidate and voter participation in LSC elections, the Department of School and Community Relations developed strategies to encourage contested elections in every attendance center. The elections were in collaboration and included the participation of community-based organizations (CBO) and reform interest groups. The School and Community Relations Department provided resources, services, and support for a wide variety of pre

and post election activities (Election Guide 1996).

The LSC elections were not without problems on November 30, 1990 when the Illinois Supreme Court removed the reform act election procedures for Local School Councils. It was found to violate the "One Person, One Vote" requirements of the state and U.S. Constitution, (Education Week, 1990). The previous selection method gave parents six votes for local council members while community residents only had two. The revamped election method gave all voters five votes to cast for the six parent members and two community members on each 11 member school council, (Education Week 1991). The new measure required the legislature to enact new procedures for the election of local school boards by July 1991. This revision provided for mayoral appointments of local school councils, sub-district councils, the Chicago Board of Education, and the School Board nominating commission within seven days after the act took effect.

The 1988 reform law mandated that all council members receive training in at least the following areas: 1) school budgets, 2) educational theory pertinent to the attendance centers particular needs, and 3) personnel selections. However, the simple transfer of power to local sites without providing training, has been problematic (Roger,

1968). Training the LSC has been identified as an important feature in SBM plans. As people take on new roles, increased training becomes important (Clune & White, 1988). Marburger (1988) highlighted the importance of training in group dynamics or human relations. Under Section 34-8.3 it states, "if training or assistance is provided by contract with personnel or organizations not associated with the school district, the period of training or assistance shall not exceed 30 hours during a given school year."

Under the second wave of reform passed on May 30, 1995, new LSC training programs were developed which was to help Local School Councils become more effective in carrying out school reform to improve student achievement. The Illinois School Code, section 34-2.3b, stated "training of Local School Council members shall be provided at the directions of the Board in consultation with the Council of Chicago Area Deans of Education." Incoming LSC members are required to complete a three-day training program (18 hrs) within set months of taking office. The three day training program included six (6) required lessons, which counts as twelve hours, and three (3) lessons, 7-9 which counts as six lessons. The subject of lesson 7, 8 & 9 are decided upon by each LSC. All incoming LSC will be monitored by

the Board. Written notices will be sent to LSC members who have not complied. If LSC members are reelected they will not be required to take lesson 1-6 again (12hrs). However, they are required to take lesson 7, 8, & 9 (6hrs) to comply with LSC training requirements (Links, 1996).

The BOE is required to monitor compliance with this mandate and declare vacant the seat of LSC members who have not complied with this training. The Chicago plan mandated council training in at least the following areas: a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of LSCs, how to develop and monitor the school improvement plan, budget, and how to select and evaluate the principal and improve student achievement.

Research Finding of studies on the Assessment of Local School Governance

There are two major questions to be asked: 1. How well was the mandated reform implemented and? 2. Given the degree of implementation, how successful was the reform in accomplishing its goals?

One of the stated goals of the Chicago School Reform Act was to raise student achievement in every school in the city so that at least half the students in each school

would be achieving at or above national norms. Two different achievement tests were given virtually in every Chicago school during the first five years of the initial reform implementation. Student achievement levels decreased on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), as well as its high school counterpart, the Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), and the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP)(Hess 1994). However, by the end of the initial five year period, IGAP math scores had recovered and were generally above the initial levels, while reading scores had reversed the declining trend and were moving back towards the initial levels. Thus, in elementary schools citywide, student achievement in 1994 was not very different from that of 1989 (Hess, 1994 & 1995).

In 1994, a Northwestern University law professor, Daniel Polsby, collaborated these findings. No systematic trends in attendance, graduation rates, or achievement were found. Chicago high school students, were much further behind national standards than were elementary students, suggesting that the longer students attend the Chicago school, the worse their comparative performance (Walberg, andNiemiec 1994).

The Consortium on Chicago School research did a five year case study of more than 20 Chicago schools. The study

focused on elementary schools where average achievement levels were well below national norms when reform began in 1989. The study examined information from teachers and principals and Local School Council activities. Important differences existed in the interactions among these key players. The study identified four types of local school politics that emerged from the reform:

Type 1 **Consolidated Principal Power** schools (39 to 46 percent) do not have a lot of participation by parents or teachers, and the principal keeps control over major school issues.

Type 2 In **Adversarial Politics** schools (4 to 9 percent), reform has been unable to move forward because of conflict over control and power.

Type 3 **Maintenance Politics** schools (14 to 24 percent including schools with "mixed" politics), may have considerable participation but most parties are satisfied with the status quo and the way things have always been. Most of the political activity focuses on bargaining for a piece of the schools scarce resources.

Type 4 In **Strong Democracy** schools (23 to 32 percent) teachers, parents, and the principal collaborate to promote school improvement. Also, there is an ongoing debate about the goals and mission of the school as well as what is good for the children.

The study also identified improvement efforts of Chicago Public Elementary Schools. It was estimated that between 26 and 35 percent of all schools followed an unfocused school improvement approach. This case study

found that such schools were relying on "add on" programs that left core instructions largely untouched. Between 36 and 45 percent of the Chicago Public Elementary Schools showed characteristics of systemic improvement efforts. Case studies showed systemic schools in this category are developing well-integrated improvement programs, specifically designed for their own students and circumstances, which were more likely to deal with core instructional issues. The remaining schools did not fall clearly into either category. These schools fell between 15 and 25 percent with some features of both approaches. In 1989, the schools with unfocused improvement efforts had average IGAP scores of 184, and in 1993 the schools in the systemic group were at 188. A systemic approach to school improvement requires time, commitment, and energy from teachers and principals. In general, the opportunities provided by PA 85-1418 for school improvement had been equitably across the system Consortium on Chicago Research, 1993).

According to Easton, et. al (1993) members of the LSC discussed in this consortium study took active roles improve parent and community involvement with the school. Council members encouraged parents to support children's learning at home, help enhance and maintain the physical

plant, and improve order and safety both inside and outside of school. The finding showed LSCs that helped to focus attention on local needs; on some occasions, they offered creative and efficient local solutions to those needs (Easton et al. 1993). It is generally clear that the directions for these improved initiatives started with the professional staff. LSCs, noted in this survey, were deemed vital institutions and were an important part of the ongoing discussion about the improvements of the school community (Chicago Systemic Initiative & Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finances, 1992). A study entitled "Charting Reform: LSCs Local Leadership at Work" examined three primary areas; 1) the background of LSC members, 2) how LSCs operate and carry out their mandated functions, 3) and the links between the LSC and the surrounding community. It compared the probability sample, the volunteer sample, and the non-responding schools and found no significant difference across these groups in basic school characteristics, including school location and the types of students enrolled. Researchers believe the data presented broadly represented the system as a whole.

According to the Consortium Report, some members serving on LSCs had developed a variety of skills and increased their sense of self-worth. In addition, they

developed many skills, including decision making skills, public speaking, knowledge of planning, and knowledge of budgets. The 1997 survey found council members had acquired a much greater appreciation for the contribution of a variety of individuals, faculty and staff, administration, parents, and community members to the progress of the school. The evidence assembled did suggest that most councils' carry out their duties in a responsible fashion. Most councils' acted as a liaison among the school, the community and an array of outside organizations. However, 10 to 15 percent of the councils were identified as having serious problems. These councils could not muster enough members to convene their meetings on a regular basis; others were plagued by conflict; and a few had members who abused their authority. In rare instances some failed to serve their schools and hindered improvement efforts. Please note that the proportion of schools where these activities occurred were quite small, none the less the lives of many children are still being affected. However, the vast majority of LSCs were viable governance organizations according to the survey findings, responsibly carry out their mandated duties and were active in building school and community partnerships.

Charting Reform: LSCs Local Leadership at Work,(1997)

found that between 50 and 60 percent of the LSCs were proactive agents of improvement in their school communities. Another quarter to a third of the councils shared some characteristics of the high performing group, but also struggled. Their responses suggested that they would benefit from more training and ongoing support. The second wave of reform was launched in 1995 when Governor Edgar of Illinois signed a Republican-drafted bill overhauling the Chicago school system. This legislative bill handed over the reins of the 410,000 students district to Mayor Richard M. Daley. "This unprecedented reform package was designed to bring more accountability, better fiscal management, and a higher quality of education to a system that desperately needed an overhaul" according to, Mr. Edgar (1997).

Paul Vallas CEO of CPS (1999) found accountability was the missing ingredient in the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act. He noted, "There was nothing wrong with local control and decentralization, but without someone taking responsibility for the system, change would be troublesome." A major provision was that an "academic accountability council" was to monitor school performance and identify failing schools where the district could intervene and implement wide-ranging corrective measures

(Education Week-Aug 1996).

The 1995 legislation directed the Mayor of Chicago to appoint a five-member board, whose function was to get the financial house in order and direct resources to classrooms within four years, according to Schleicher (1995). The Mayor also was given the power to manage parents, principals were empowered to exert control over school operations, and an 18-month moratorium was placed on teacher strikes. The board's responsibilities included privatization of non-educational functions, cutting waste, monitoring school improvements, and assuring a boost in student achievement (Schleicher 1998).

Lonnie Harp (1995, Education Week) revealed additional provisions created by the new 1995 reform law. Some provisions noted are that "academic accountability councils" monitored schools performance, identified failing schools, adopted a new anti-nepotism policy; and trustees had to take recorded votes for contracts of more than 10,000; principals were given the responsibility of supervising custodial and food-service workers, and had authority to set school schedules. Harps further noted that during the first year of funding, the LSCs and principals that oversee each school were guaranteed minimum funding of $261 million. "The good thing is that there is

nothing about the bill that limits the authority of school councils," according to Donald R. Moore, executive director of Designs for Change (1989).

According to Jeanne Ponessa (1996), "The Chicago Plan Sought to Improve Achievement and Bolster Accountability," throughout the district. Among other things, the plan called for the creation of a core curriculum framework and a comprehensive student assessment plan. Other elements of the plan included: an increase of elementary school instruction time from 300 to 360 minutes per day; adding 300 new preschool centers to serve an additional 12,000 children between 3 and 4; creating "freshman academies" to assist 9th graders in their transition to high school; and creation of its "10,000 Tutors" program to assist at-risk elementary and high school students.

Under the new policy, underachieving third, sixth and eight grade students were required to attend a six-week summer bridge program before being promoted to the next grade level (Clowes, 1996). The policy mandated that during the 1996-1997 school year, third grade students who scored more than one year below grade level, and sixth grade students who scored more than one and a half years below grade level in reading or mathematics were required to attend summer school. Student performance was based on

the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. During the same year eighth grade students who scored more than two years below grade level in reading or mathematics, based on ITBS, were also required to attend the bridge program before graduating.

Catalyst (1997) reported that the 1995 legislation gave LSCs additional budgetary powers. These powers included approving receipts and expenditures for schools' internal accounts, voting on requests for the use of school facilities for lectures and concerts, including approving fundraising by non-school organizations that use the building. In addition, this legislation gave the school system's CEO veto power over an LSC's decision to renew its principal's contract; the Chicago Board of Education serves as a court of appeal. Using powers granted under the new reform law, district leaders have removed one LSC and suspended another (Catalyst 1997). Principals too were affected by reform. The 1995 reform shifted principals performance accountability back toward the central office even as it sustained their political accountability to LSCs. According to Shipps, Kahne, & Smylie (1999) criteria for success becam defined by compliance with central policies and procedures and standardized benchmarks for school performance.

This Legislation also mandated three full days of training for new LSC members, to be completed within 6 hours, plus the board is required to remove members who failed to participate. Mandated training under this law for LSC is under the direction of the Dean of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The Reform act stated that the sub-district superintendent (later, the CEO), could dissolve an LSC and order new elections after a school had been on academic probation for one year without making adequate progress, (Link 1996). The LSC were given a chance for hearing, and the School Board had to approve the dissolution. In that same legislative bills if the CEO deems a school to be in "educational crisis," he can take "immediate corrective action," including removal of the LSC. If the School Board determines that a chronically under performing school should be placed on "intervention" the CEO can remove the LSC. In such cases, the CEO takes over the LSC's responsibilities until the new members are elected. LSC elections were moved to report card pick-up day and individual schools now have lump sum budgeting. Because of the change in election dates to report-card pick up day, the number of votes more than doubled between 1993 and 1996 (Catalyst, May 1996).

The new administration's "first semester" accomplishments listed were numerous and impressive, Williams, Lenz 1996). "The pace and impatience of the Vallas administration worried many without an educational vision and with a strong distaste for local democracy, the foundation of reform trembled," (Williams, Catalyst 1996).

The question posed was, had reform as defined before the 1995 legislation ended? One student of reform reported the reform law of 1988 had opened up the system; another contended that by removing the restraints on change, reform had left schools unable to externalize blame for failure on a system that stifled innovation (Designs for Change 1997).

Reform made the walls between schools and the world outside them more porous. By fostering the development of independent intermediary organizations, the first reform had created the conditions outside the schools that supported their improvement. However, without reform's first phase, it would have been difficult for Vallas to find the external partners for schools on probation or on his "watch list." Reform also has started a process of real improvement in schools, which appeared related to democratic governance.

School reform was experiencing the transition that one historian of social work, writing at the turn of the

century, called the shift from cause to function, which Max Weber coined "the routinization of charisma" Lubove 1965). The Chicago School Reform Act listed structural elements that have been implemented. Revisions of the law governing school reform have fixed a number of initial defects; 2) most local school councils have proved their competence; 3) parents and community feel they have ownership of their local schools; 4) schools still have substantial discretion over their budgets; 5) new principals have been installed in schools; 6) teachers can draw on an array of excellent in-service programs; 7) local school councils can find high-quality help and advice; 8) a means of identifying and assisting poorly performing schools is under way; 9) leaner and stronger central administration has balanced the budget and delivered financial stability; 10) violence in and around schools has lessened; and 11) signs of educational innovation and improved student learning abound, especially in elementary schools (Martinez, Chicago Tribune 1999).

Chicago school reform gained strength and penetrated deeply into the fabric of the city because it originated not as a narrowly targeted attempted to improve schooling, but as a broad-based social movement. Its social movement origins spread "ownership" of reform among many groups; it

helped define reform as an ongoing process rather than a quick fix (Katz 1997).

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